



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES
A Healthcare Service Agency
, funding for service dollar for the Victory Gardens

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Patricia A. Rehmer, MSN
Commissioner

**Testimony of Patricia A. Rehmer, MSN, Commissioner
Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services
Before the Appropriations Committee
February 18, 2014**

Good morning, Senator Bye, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Patricia A. Rehmer, Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. As you know, DMHAS, as a health care service agency, focuses on helping more than 110,000 adults over the age of 18 and who are medically indigent from communities throughout Connecticut - to recover and sustain their health in response to a psychiatric disability and/or substance use disorder. The DMHAS system of care is a public/private partnership. It includes DMHAS' operated services – one (1) hospital and six (6) local mental health centers – and contracted partnerships with the state's general hospitals and over 165 private non-profit, community-based agencies statewide.

I am pleased to be here to discuss the Governor's proposed mid-term budget for FY 2015. The Governor has proposed budget adjustments that continue to support the Department's commitment to its core mission of promoting wellness, preventing illness, and strengthening a recovery-oriented system of care for people with serious psychiatric and substance use conditions. This mid-term budget continues to focus on funding for community services rather than inpatient care as we move our system forward. The DMHAS proposed budget presented to you by the Governor is one that not only protects core services that are in place, but also adds funding that is critical to the system as we continue to advance recovery-oriented services.

The Governor's recommended mid- term budget for DMHAS includes new funding for supportive housing and residential services for high risk clients, new funding for service dollars for the Victory Gardens project in Newington and slight adjustments in the Young Adult Services program, the Acquired Brain Injury program and the Home and Community Based Waiver program. The specifics for the new dollars are as follows:

New funding is recommended as part of the Governor's Mental Health Initiative in the amount of \$3.3 million in FY 2015. These dollars include \$1.1 million to provide additional services to 110 dedicated units of supportive housing for clients in scatter site locations, \$1.7 million in new residential and transitional services to high risk populations, \$289,000 in wrap around services for 74 units of supportive housing dedicated to veterans and \$250,000 in funding for an anti-stigma campaign. The new dollars will help move more people into the community from expensive hospital settings, continue to provide housing and supports to homeless individuals and veterans with behavioral health disorders as well as support efforts to end stigma (discrimination) against the people we serve.

We are also very pleased that this budget continues the funding of \$10.0 million for the development of a Health Home initiative to better coordinate behavioral and physical healthcare for the DMHAS population, and provides \$500,000 for funds to support wrap-around services for 100 units of supportive housing expected to come on line in January of 2015.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address the Committee today. I believe that the budget before you will help address many of the needs of those we serve. We will be happy to take any questions you may have at this time.